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AUTHOR Hyun, Eunsook
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the theoretical underpinnings of a nationwide collaborative research project to develop an early childhood teacher preparation model for developmentally and culturally appropriate practice (DCAP). It notes that this model allows prospective teachers to identify their own cultural and ethnic backgrounds and to understand cultural diversity while helping them learn to be sensitive to the cultural backgrounds and characteristics of their future students. The knowledge foundation for DCAP is delineated as including developmentally appropriate practice, multicultural education goals, the anti-bias curriculum, and culturally congruent critical pedagogy a process that helps future teachers reflect on using children's backgrounds as an instructional tool. The paper concludes with a summary of an interactive symposium describing the project and presenting insights and results obtained over the 3 years of the project. (Contains 23 references.) (KB)

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# Exploring Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice (DCAP) Through A Nationwide Collaborative Teacher Preparation Project

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**Eunsook Hyun, Ph.D.**

**Florida Gulf Coast University**

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Early Childhood Teacher Education for Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice (DCAP) Research Net, 1998 Annual Meeting and Research Presentation.

Presented at the 1998 NAEYC Annual Conference Wednesday November 18, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. 1998, Toronto, Canada, Confederation 3, The Royal York Hotel
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# Exploring Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice (DCAP) Through A Nationwide Collaborative Teacher Preparation Project

## Brief Background of Teacher Preparation for Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice (DCAP) Research Net

Since 1987, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has embraced Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) as a pedagogical guideline for Early Childhood Education (Bredekamp. 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Over the last decade many early childhood educators have critiqued DAP (Bowman, 1994, 1992; Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992; Delpit, 1988, 1995; Derman-Sparks, 1992; Jipson, 1991; Mallory & New, 1994; Spodek & Brown, 1993; Swadener & Miller-March, 1993). DAP, they argue, must pay greater attention to cultural differences and be extended to include culturally appropriate practice. In response to this criticism, several teacher educators (Hyun, 1998; Hyun, 1996; Hyun, 1995; Hyun, & Marshall, 1997; Hyun, & Marshall, 1996; Hyun & Dana, in press; Hyun, Marshall, & Dana, 1995) developed a model which expands DAP called Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice (DCAP).

Teacher preparation for DCAP is a proposal for a much-needed and workable teacher education model to help prospective teachers identify their own cultural and ethnic backgrounds and to understand cultural diversity while helping them learn to be

sensitive to the cultural backgrounds and characteristics of the children they will teach. This model intends to help prospective teachers develop multiple/multiethnic perspective-taking abilities and culturally congruent critical pedagogy so that they can incorporate the cultural diversity of the children into their teaching. This approach ultimately aims to make early childhood education truly for all individual--multicultural.

In order to adapt DCAP as a framework for providing early childhood education that is more sensitive to multiple and multiethnic perspectives, teachers and prospective teachers should be familiar with the following components which serve as a foundation for DCAP: (1) Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) (Bredekamp. 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997); (2) the goals of multicultural education and appropriate messages for young children (York, 1991); (3) Anti-Bias Curriculum (Derman-Sparks, 1989), and (4) Culturally Congruent Critical Pedagogy (Hollins, King, & Hayman, 1994; Giroux, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Nieto, 1992).

Based on these knowledge, teachers are required to reflect on their teaching by critically inquiring whether every child in the classroom has received an equal and culturally congruent teaching and learning experience for their development. The teacher strives to learn about and understand each child's unique family influence that directly affects the child's learning and problem solving skills. Through this process of critical pedagogy, the teacher reflects on how s/he can use the child's unique background as a powerful instructional tool for all the children in the classroom. This kind of fundamental reflective thinking used with the teacher's actual everyday practice is what is meant by developmentally and culturally appropriate practice. Such reflection

helps to ensure that teachers consider multiple and diverse viewpoints as well as the long-term social and moral consequences of their decisions. Teaching in this fashion will more likely result in education that is truly multicultural--for all individuals.

We need continuous multiple approaches for creating developmentally and culturally appropriate practice in early childhood teacher preparation. This project started since 1995 with a few early childhood teacher educators. In November of 1996, a group of teacher educators had an initial meeting (at the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators annual meeting in conjunction with NAEYC Annual conference) for a nation wide collaborative research project to implement the idea of DCAP teacher preparation. In November of 1997, at the NAEYC annual meeting, participants from eight different states (CA., PA., OK., FL., MN., MA., TX., NM.) involved in this national collaborative research project presentation. After the 1997 Annual meeting and presentation the research participants has increased up to 31 participants, 18 states including Hawaii and Ontario, Canada. This particular research group meets annually at NAEYC annual conference and shares their stories of DCAP teacher preparation--effectiveness, dilemmas, obstacles, re-defined/new ideas for practices, personal insights, etc.

**Purposes of 1998 Annual Presentation, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Confederation 3, Royal York Hotel:**

The purpose of this interactive symposium was to report, discuss, and share three years of the Nation-wide Collaborative Research Project - Early Childhood Teacher Preparation for Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice (DCAP).

**Summary of the 1998 presentation:**

The presentation is designed for the nation-wide participants to present their ways of preparing early childhood DCAP teachers and the effectiveness of it as well as to share dilemmas, obstacles, re-defined/new ideas for practices, and personal insights. **This year our nation-wide research focus is "how we infuse the notion of DCAP teacher preparation into integrated subject areas in teacher education curriculum."** Using interactive symposium format, discussion leaders led group presentations and the sharing. After the small group report and discussion, as large group, multi-sites cross case analysis and conclusion were presented.

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|---|---|
| Presenter: | Dr. Eunsook Hyun |
| Title: | History and Current Status of the DCAP Movement |
| Connection: | Background information |
| | |
| Co-Presenters: | Drs. James Johnson & Jaipaul Roopnarine |
| Title: | DCAP and Child Play |
| Connection: | Child Development course |
| | |
| Presenter: | Dr. Eunsook Hyun |
| Title: | Gender-Fair and Gender-Congruent Practices in DCAP |
| Connection: | ECE Integrated Curriculum for Social Studies, Humanities, and Arts |
| | |
| Presenter: | Dr. Craig Heller |
| Title: | Culturally Diverse Fathers and Father Figures in Children's Picture Books. |
| Connection: | Emerging literacy course |

Presenter: Dr. Rosario Morales
Title: Meaningful Field Work Experiences Related to Cultural Diversity for Early Childhood Teachers
Connection: Field Experiences

Co-Presenters: Drs. Jocelynn Smrekar and Celeste Matthews
Title: Integrating Multicultural Practices into the
Classroom: How Far is Too Far?
Connection: Creative expressions

Discussant/Organizer: Dr. Eunsook Hyun
Topic: Where Do We Go from Here? Plans for Future Research of DCAP
Connection: Collaborating in future research of DCAP

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